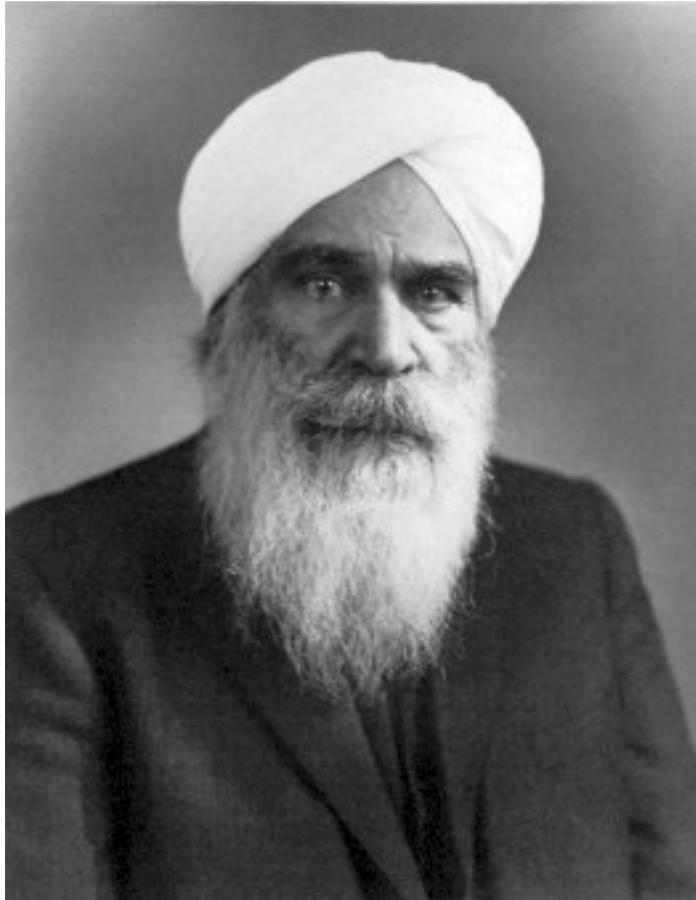


# All the World's a Play

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The Masters see the world in its true colors. We have yet to develop that eye which enables us to see the correct posture of the world and its affairs. They see from the level of the soul. We see everything from the physical level, for we are one with the body. This is the principal difference between Masters and other human beings.



The worldly people think that the body and its connections are all permanent; but, in fact, the whole world is changing. Truth is that which is permanent, imperishable, and unchangeable — always constant. Most people see the world as something permanent, and declare, "The world is sweet — who has seen beyond it?" and, "This is the only heaven that exists." But, those who see from a more accurate level — the level of soul — say, "O world, what are you doing? What tragedy!" Masters do not give out any philosophy, but rather they state the simple, common sense facts. They do not speak by inference; they are clear observers who see exactly the world's condition. They repeatedly proclaim the real truth of the matter, but no one hears, or cares to hear. The world is in a very tragic condition.

The soul has got a body. The body does not possess the soul. With great blessing from God, the body was given to fulfill a high purpose; and what is that purpose? It is to unravel the mystery of life. There is a Creator of all things — One through Whom the whole of creation came into being — and we must know that Creator. Preceding this ultimate goal, man must

come to know himself; this can be done in the company of another who already knows himself, and has solved the mystery of life.

Life is two-part: there is outer life and inner life. Those who live only in the outer aspect accept the world as being the truth, even while going through the daily experiences of its ups and downs, even though it is obvious that no person is really happy here.

*Kabir Sahib says, I have not seen one indweller of this body who is happy; Whosoever I saw was unhappy.*

Those who think always at the body's level and become the very image of the body can never be happy. *O Nanak, the whole world is unhappy.* — Can anyone then be happy in this world? — Only he who has solved the mystery of life, and those who, through keeping his company, gain right understanding.

Why do we all suffer so? And, how can we become truly happy? *Only the Saint's disciple can be happy.* The Saint enjoys true happiness, while all others are in deep misery.

*Union with the Gurumukh, company of a Sadh, color of the Naam;  
This is the true association through which Thy Name is remembered.*

It is a prayer uttered by awakened souls. God should guide our intellect — God, or he in whom God has manifested, for only with right guidance can the intellect work unerringly in the way it is directed. Further, the mind should follow the intellect, and the senses should follow the direction of the mind. Each sense should be in perfect control, and work according to the person's will. You can see that, at present, the machinery of our being is all working upside down. Outer enjoyments draw the senses, senses draw the mind, mind carries away the intellect, and this is the reason for all the misery.

We are soul. We are conscious entities. *Kabir says, This is God's child.* He also tells us, *Your caste was of Sat Naam.*

The Masters appeal to our better instincts. O soul, you are a part of the All-Consciousness; but by connecting yourself with the low-caste mind, you have forgotten your true and noble identity in the sense-enjoyments, and have become the body's image and the image of the world. You are so steeped in this forgetfulness that even the Sustainer is not remembered. This is what is at the root of all unhappiness.

Our intellect works with fingertip function; so if only the mind would listen and obey the intellect, it would be guided into right action. The intellect will give clear warning for a few times; but if the mind does not listen,

then the intellect remains quiet. This is what is often termed the voice of conscience speaking, which gives us the right guidance. If you act wrongly, it will tell you; and if you listen and then act upon the guidance, you are saved from wrong action. Otherwise, if the imperial wall is infringed upon, then the intellect or conscience remains silent. Even the very worst type of human being has a conscience. If only the mind would act upon the suggestions from the intellect, the whole being would be in perfect control, and the person would enjoy the happy situation. Why is the Saint's disciple happy? He has got one thing set: his horse is pulling the cart — the cart is not before the horse.

All the world is intoxicated by outer enchantments; and yet when Masters come, whom do they address? Not the greater population, but themselves — their own companion which is the physical form. Is not the body the first companion we have when we come to the world? It is accompanied also by the senses; and Masters address the body and its senses,

*O body of mine, what kind of karmas have you earned since you came to this world?*

What have you done with your physical life? It was thy turn to meet God, but have you done so? He cannot be realized by the senses, the intellect, or the pranas [vital airs]. He can be experienced only by the soul, which is a conscious entity that gives guidance to the body through the intellect.

One Master gives a simple example: There was a monkey and a goat; and one day after milking the goat, the housewife left the milk standing nearby. Although the monkey was tied to a tree, yet he could reach the milk, and promptly drank it. He cleverly splashed a little milk on the goat's mouth, and when the housewife returned, she jumped to the conclusion that the goat had drunk it, and gave it a beating. The Master then likens our mind to this monkey which plays havoc, but the body gets the blame and the punishment for the mind's bad deeds.

The human form is the highest of all species; it is the form in which the Lord can be realized; it is the form which is received by the soul through great good fortune. Even the gods and goddesses yearn to be born into the physical form of the human being. Instead of gaining realization, the poor body is made miserable just like the goat, through the mind's misleading influence which overpowers the intellect and forces it to fulfill its wishes. Can you not analyze clearly the reason for all your unhappiness?

*O body of mine, what kind of karmas have you earned since you came to this world?*

You never gave a single sincere thought to your Maker. Is there some machinery which forms the body in the mother's womb? A dog's offspring is born in the dog's image, and the human offspring is born in the image of man. So, who makes all these features? O body, you make no effort to know your Maker! Masters do not preach to people, but they advise them — *O body, you came to this world, but for what purpose?* You came with a golden opportunity — it is thy turn to meet God. He can be known in this form, but you have yet to do this work. The Master also addresses the senses — *O eyes of mine, the Lord put light in you; See nothing but the Lord.* With that God-given sight, see Him in all things. *O ears of mine, the Lord attached you to this body; Listen to the Sat Bani,* — the Music of the Spheres.

*This music hath resounded in all four yugas; The True One made it audible.* You can hear this delightful music with the grace of the Guru.

*The Guru's Bani is vibrating in all; He Himself created it, and He Himself manifests it.* We have also, *Those who repeated the Naam became immortal and reached Infinity.*

Instead of all this wonderful experience, what did the senses do with the golden opportunity? *O tongue, you taster of tasteless things, your thirst will never go.* You should have tasted the Nectar of Immortality, but you are pinioned to the lesser tastes of the world.

So, right understanding can be had only through a Master-Soul who looks at everything from the level of soul. There are two sides to a picture. On one side you may see beautiful forms or scenery, but on the reverse there is nothing. Masters stand on the edge and survey the worldly scene. Those with a constantly outward view, who live only the outer aspect of life, continue to fill the heart's reservoir with impressions of the world and its events, to the point of overflowing. It is a very superficial life, in which people even dream of these happenings and speak aloud of them in their sleep. They have never "tapped inside" to find out who they are, for the body's beauty and attraction exist only because of the true being within it. The body is honored and greeted with pleasure while the soul remains within.

*While the Friend (Lord) resides within, the companion (soul) remains; When the companion leaves, only ashes are left.*

Even the world's attractiveness depends upon you, for if you die the worldly pleasures mean nothing. We spend all our lives eating and drinking, but we have no awareness.

So, there are two ways to view life and to live life. You have been born into some religion; that is all right, stay there. But, unfortunately, no

matter to what religion one belongs, one still remains at the level of mind and senses. And, where do such people go? *Wherever the attention is, there will you reside.* Brothers, what are we doing? Man knows much about the body — to cure it, to destroy it. Through the intellect many achievements have been accomplished: through radio and television one can see and hear people across thousands of miles; one can traverse the earth in a matter of hours. But, with all this advancement, is a man happy?

One Master asks, *What is the foundation of all knowledge? It is to know who one is.* He says also that although mankind has acquired excessive knowledge of the physical and intellectual sides of man, all at one sense-level, yet with all this, man is a fool. One *is* but a fool without right understanding. A life everlasting can be lived by sitting in the circle of a realized soul, which cannot be got from the learned, the intellectuals, readers of scriptures, or propagandists. If a realized soul is also learned academically, he will explain the subject in a variety of ways. If he is illiterate and without worldly learning, he will give out the Truth in a simple and common-sense manner, in the form of parables and examples.

When Bulleh Shah went to Shah Inayat, he asked how one can realize God. Shah Inayat replied, "What is there to it? Simply withdraw from here and attach there." It is matter of directing the attention, of withdrawing from the body and its environments from the sense-level. Awareness will then come of itself, and so will the awareness of the Sustainer of all life. To realize God is not difficult like acquiring worldly knowledge, for worldly knowledge requires some hypothesis; but to realize God is a straightforward method of self-analysis. It is really very clear and simple; but because of our superficial life and our deep forgetfulness, the whole position is topsy-turvy. You should have gotten to know the Creator during your lifetime; you should have gained knowledge of all creation, — of *Pind, And, Brahmand* and *Par Brahmand*. Instead of this, the spinning wheel is reversed.

We will take a hymn of Guru Nanak, who was the first Sikh Guru. The Masters come to cry out the Truth to the people. Those who listen gain some benefit. What is the use of playing a penny whistle amid the sound of a dozen kettle drums? Those who hear the single voice are few and fortunate. After preaching the whole of *Gita*, Lord Krishna said, "O Arjuna, did you listen?" Many may listen, but it is a matter of digesting the words. You have all been listening to my voice, but have the words gone home? Will you take any action after hearing them? Having listened to the advice, we must develop awareness.

*The body is thought to be immortal, but the world is just a play.*

This world is like a magician's act. He fascinates his audience with his magic; but in the end, what is in it? It is all deception — a grand delusion. *The body is the beginning of delusion.* We see the whole of life from the body's level, and that is how the illusion starts. Through the mind and the senses, we make the body work — we, the controller. If the controller withdraws, then awareness comes.

Kabir Sahib also says, *The Magician performed his play, and all came to see the show.* But, it is all an illusion, and through lack of the right understanding, people are drifting farther and farther away. Some cry, some groan, some laugh, and some dance — it is a strange scene to those who can survey it clearly. When a man is born, he enters a closely guarded prison; but the people around the child rejoice. The poor soul has entered a prison and everyone is happy about it! If only the soul, while living in this human form, would learn to rise above its prison of illusion, it would gain awareness and see the whole picture in its true perspective.

Everything is the Lord's play. Many have asked, "But why did He start this play?" This is a question that should be asked of Him alone. When we search the words of the Masters, we find they tell us that when the Lord wished to become from one to many, the whole of creation came into being. You will find only this much information on the subject. *From one Source, millions of rivers flowed forth.* As long as a person remains under the influence of mind and senses, this question continues to arise. When one rises above, it is no longer imperative. It is similar to the proverbial riddle: did the tree come first, or the seed? Did the chicken come first, or the egg? Is there any answer to these questions at the intellectual level? We cannot understand the functions of all these laws until we rise above the body and its environments.

We never stop to realize that the body will not last forever. A man went to a fakir and informed him that a certain man was dying. The fakir asked the dying man's age, and was told that he was 72. The fakir promptly said, "He has been dying for 72 years now — this is merely his last breath." A mother considers that her child is growing, but is he? If he is destined to live for fifty years, then when he is ten, only forty are left. When he reaches twenty years of age, only thirty years are left. We can never escape this paradoxical illusion without rising above the body by self-analysis. Can you free yourselves? If you have got as far as realizing that you cannot, you should furthermore learn why you cannot. It is because the attachments drag your senses, and the senses drag your mind, and the mind drags your intellect. For this problem right guidance is most necessary.

The human birth is the grand opportunity wherein you can solve the mystery — in the company of he who has already found the answer, and who will demonstrate this practical self-analysis by giving you inner

experience. That experience must then be increased daily. If you did a thousand varieties of practices, you would not get Light within but remain at the sense-level. Good actions will bring good reward, but will not release the soul from its prison. With our own eyes we see the impermanence around us daily, and yet we do nothing to get out of the futile situation.

*Nanak says without knowing thyself, this illusion cannot be shattered.*

We must come to know our true self through analyzing soul from mind and senses. We should be so much in control of our being that we hear whenever we wish to hear and see whenever we wish to see. Just like a factory, the machinery is switched on in whichever department is required to do the work. We should be able to work through whichever sense we so choose; but we are dragged around by our senses and blindly think that if the body is comfortable, we will be happy. Even if the body is comfortable for a while, how can that be a permanent position? The *Vedas* tell us that the world is untrue and the soul is the Truth. It is also written, *O Lord, take me from untruth to the Truth.*

The world is made of matter, and the body is also made of matter; both are constantly changing, and this is where the delusion started. Whatever the seed, so will the fruit be. According to the karmas, the pen wrote our relationships, and some became this and some became that. When the Lord's flowing pen has written your life, why not accept it and live through it with love in your heart? All give and take should be experienced cheerfully and with gratitude. Try to get free from all entanglement, and when you reach God you can ask Him why He made everything so.

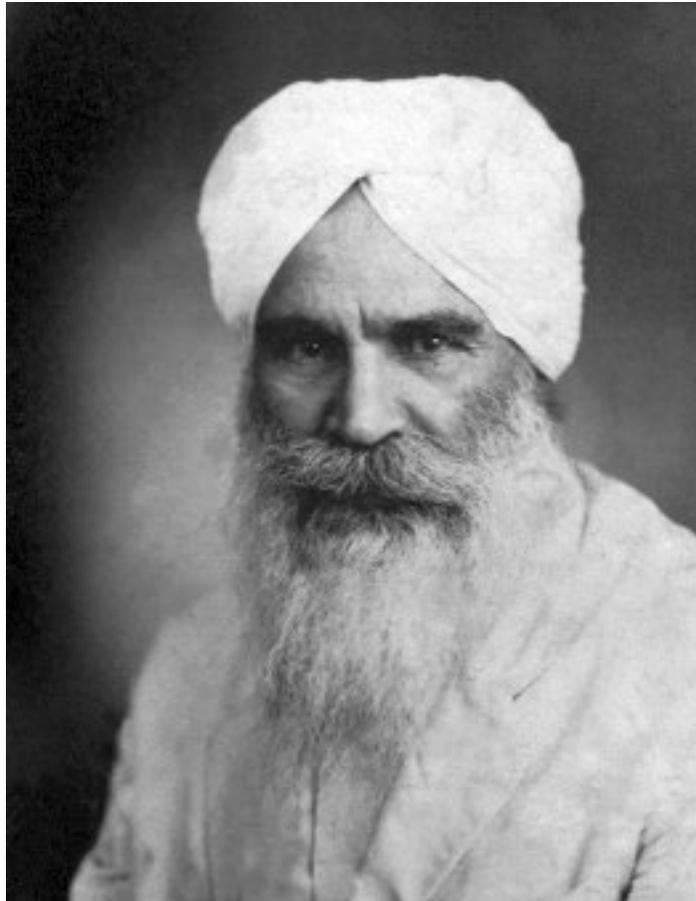
We should try to understand that the few days of existence here are but a play within the great play. When that Power withdraws from our being, all is finished here — even the body is finished. Those who possess millions will leave them behind, and likewise the possessors of mansions, palaces, and other property. What then will remain with us? — Just the reactions to those actions which were done by squeezing the blood of others and grasping that which we have not earned, etc. You received the pattern of this life according to your past actions, and daily you are now sowing new seeds. The past *sanchit* karmas [those which have accumulated in store] are already upon your head, and you are daily adding to that load. The Masters ask, *You have got the human birth; so how much lighter have you become?* One can reduce the weight of karma by becoming the conscious co-worker of the Divine Plan, and this is the only way.

We attach too much importance to the well-being of the body — hence the misery. This place has no permanent happiness for us. We eat, we drink — in the end the food eats us. Excessive enjoyment through the senses will result in the senses enjoying us! We will become incapable of

enjoying — satiated. It is easily apparent that those who overeat get bad livers, stomachs, etc. The ancient Rishis related that the food god went to Lord Vishnu with the complaint that people were eating him mercilessly. Lord Vishnu solved his problem by advising, "Those who eat you unnecessarily — you eat them!" So, enjoyment in excess loses its power of enjoyment.

*The body is thought to be immortal, but the world is just a play; we overburdened ourselves with greed, desire, and all things low.*

Our misery is due to greed and numerous other desires. Desire is the root cause of everything — anger, greed, attachment, ego, enjoyment — all five are frequently condemned, but desire is the root cause of all. If you place a rock in a fast-flowing stream, what will result? The water will hit the rock, and two things will occur: noise and foam. If anything obstructs our desire we become angry, and the angry person cannot speak softly — he rants and raves, and then begins to foam at the mouth.



Obstructions to his wishes increase his desire; and if the object of his desire is within reach, he will do anything to gain possession of it: cheat, lie, and resort to hypocrisy. If he does achieve his object of desire, he will not want to leave it; and this is called attachment. Sometimes he becomes intoxicated with the thought of his achievements, and this is pride or ego. It is ironical that man does not realize that his desires can never be really satisfied, for intellect works up to a certain point, and along with the mind and senses is an instrument only of the soul's outer expressions. Only the soul's experiences can be truly satisfying.

They say that the monkey, who is known to have a strong love and attachment for its children, will actually stand on its child in order to save its own life if a flood occurs. Man is no different — when his life is

threatened, he will sacrifice all his finer aspirations. You will find that all his actions have a single motive: his own comfort in one way or another. Marriage, for instance, offers comfort, pleasure, and a sense of well-being; and if we do not get these things out of it, then quickly we turn to divorce. Why do we want children? They give us pleasure when they are young, and the hope of assistance when we are old. Why do we strive to earn more and more money? For houses, cars, and many other things for the body's comfort; we go from bad to worse.

There is brevity in the words of the Masters. Clearly and concisely they place the truth before us. But, we have been hoodwinked by the play of the world, and so: *We overburden ourselves with greed, desire, and all things low.*

There are three types of karmas: *prarabdh*, *kriyaman*, and *sanchit*, [for a complete discussion of this point, see *Man! Know Thyself*] and we are subject to the laws of all three. If a man comes to know himself and realizes God during his lifetime, he then sees all creation from a higher level and thereby gains a true view of things. Having become a co-worker of the Divine Plan, the past karmas no longer apply to him.

When King Dhritarashtra was asked in which birth he had committed an action to warrant his present blindness, he replied that he knew his past history for one hundred births back, and there had been nothing to cause such impediment. Then Lord Krishna gave the King special grace, and he was able to see back farther than one hundred births; and there he found the cause of his blindness.

So, if one comes to know the great Controller of all things and sees how He controls everything, he will no longer be affected by any action, for he knows that he is no longer involved himself. He who does something must pay or receive for the action; but he who does nothing, and by spiritual growth renders his past karmas ineffective, like roasting so many seeds over the fire, finds that the seeds of his past actions will no longer have the power to take root and grow. Lord Buddha said, *Be desireless*. The basic teachings of all true Masters are the same. They may express them somewhat differently, and in a variety of languages, but the essence remains constant. Guru Gobind Singh said, *Be above desire*.

For example, during the life of King Akbar, his chief minister, Wali Ram, was well known for being utterly devoted to the King. As a gesture of respect, all courtiers would stand erect when the King entered the court, and remained so until the King was seated. On one occasion a scorpion had found its way into Wali Ram's clothes; and when he stood up for the King's entrance, the scorpion stung him, first once, then twice, then again a third time. The pain from the stings became excruciating; but out of his great respect for the King, he resisted the instinct to remove the scorpion.

He afterwards thought deeply about this incident, and related it to the King; adding that if such respect came from serving an earthly emperor, would it not be better to serve the Great Giver of all things? Something strange awakened in Wali Ram, and he left the King's court and ran into the wilderness. King Akbar valued his worth highly, and sent other ministers to call him back to the court. But, Wali Ram refused, pointing out that while he had served the King, he had obeyed his orders implicitly; but he was now serving a greater Emperor. When all efforts had failed to induce Wali Ram back to the palace, the King himself went to plead his cause, and spoke of the great esteem and love he held for Wali Ram, begging him to return to his court. Wali Ram again explained that he was now serving another King. Finally King Akbar granted any boon he chose, and Wali Ram replied, "Then kindly remove yourself from my presence, and leave me in peace."

*I have seen you (body) deteriorating from fine clay into mud.*

Those who see from lofty levels ask man what he is so proud of, when his body will end up under the earth, and will disintegrate into dust? The body is respected, but only as long as the soul remains within.

*Listen, listen to my teaching:  
Do good in this life; it may not come again.*

This life is a golden opportunity for a great and noble purpose. *When this opportunity leaves, it may not return, and the valuable birth is wasted.* Also,

*This time you have got is very beautiful;  
Become serene and escape from the heat.*

Make the most of it — do this important work. There are many definitions of what comprises good actions, but the Masters teach that the very best actions are those which take one nearer to God. It follows that the bad actions are those which take one farther from the Lord.

Kabir Sahib advises, *Do good actions, repeat the Naam, for no one knows about tomorrow.* He goes even further and states, *No one knows of the next minute.*

What are good actions? Inherit true living. Always speak the truth, refrain from stealing, cheating, and hypocrisy. People often complain that nowadays it is difficult to keep up these commandments and run their business life. "How can we do business? The customers will not come and the business will fail." But, I always reassure them that the customers

may be few in the beginning, but they *will* come, and they will grow to rely on the honest businessman and be regular dependable customers.

It is said of Father Abraham that he never told a lie, but was known to speak "half-truths." By this it means that one need only give as much information as is necessary. If by telling the whole story some person will suffer, then why tell all? These things are difficult to explain in fine detail, but I will give an example. While you are standing in the street, a cow passes you running fast. A few minutes later she is followed by a butcher, knife in hand, running to catch up with the cow. If he asks you which way the cow went, knowing his intentions are to kill the cow; you can reply in an indirect way rather than help him toward his bad actions. Additionally, those actions which do not increase your selfishness are good; it is good to consider the welfare of others always.

*Those who keep the Guru overhead and live in His commands — Kabir says for such there is no fear in all three worlds.*

Inherit the Truth, and many sins will be washed away. Any kind of work done through lies or performed surreptitiously is plainly committing sin. Even in thought one should be pure. Remember, chastity is life, and sexuality is death. Those who live their lives according to the scriptures are living correctly, but whosoever gives his life over to sexuality is living the wrong kind of life. Become *brahmchari* or pure in mind, speech, and action; and furthermore, have no hatred for any man, for each being has a soul, and is the entity of the Lord and Sustainer of all life. Some men are employers and some are employees — this is due to reactions of the past karmas — but God is in each being; so each one should be served selflessly. All these are great *dharmas* or tenets of righteous living, but non-violence or non-injury is the supreme dharma. God is in every being; so if you are cutting His child's throat, how can you realize Him? —*Repeat the Naam* without delay, for no one knows what will happen in the next minute.

What is Naam? *Naam sustains Khand and Brahmand.* The Supreme Lord is Nameless; but when He came into expression, that expression was termed *Naam* or Name. Only He knows why this whole play was created. In the game of blind man's bluff, only the courageous child will approach fearlessly and challenge the blindfolded one to catch him. He who realizes God within his own physical form will no longer be snared by illusion or the Negative Power, for he is above the illusion; his eye is developed so he never falls. Guru Nanak advises one to live up to the teachings of such a personality: *Do good in this life; it may not come again.* Those actions will remain with you when you leave. Become one — absorb it into your life. Do those things which bring you nearer to God; and what is the biggest helping factor? Keep the company of one who has realized God. *He who obeys the Guru's words will one hundred percent realize the Lord.*

A true Master will never give the wrong advice, for he is here to lead the people along the right path.

*I tell you, physical form, listen to my teaching: You have lost faith, falsely condemning and defaming others.*

Why defame others by enlarging upon their faults and failings? To do this is to criticize — even if you minimize their faults, it is criticizing. If you must say something, then speak of what is correct, or speak of a person's good points. Our Hazur used to say that there is some kind of taste in eating, drinking, etc.; but what taste is there in belittling others? Is it sweet, sour, salty, or what? But, everyone suffers from this disease — just sit down and try an experiment: listen quietly and you will hear, "So and so is bad, so and so is good, so and so is doing this and that," and so on. Or, you will hear gossip about women, finance, etc. Through indulging in such empty and useless talk every day, man has lost his faith in humanity. Having come to the world for a special task, he became involved in inferior activities. If a certain person sets a good example and you want to copy him, then become good. If he does more meditation, then you also do more. Do not envy him, but improve your own life. Humanity is losing all its expressions of good character. Do not worry over the past, that cannot be helped now; but live righteously in the present, and build your spiritual future.

*Your eye covets, you steal and backbite;  
The soul will go, and leave you like a forsaken woman.*

We have an envious eye for the possessions of others, and constantly speak in terms of passion, anger, wealth, but very rarely talk of God. When the soul leaves what will the body's condition be? When a woman's husband forsakes her, she is no longer respected in the community. Likewise, there is no value in the body alone; but we, the soul, are its value. A man is welcome everywhere, as long as there is life in his body. We spend our precious time caring for it; but Guru Nanak tells us that the body's glory is due to the soul, to which we hardly give a second's thought.

*You, O body, remained in a dream and what karmas have you earned?  
Whatever my mind desired, I even stole for it.*

We spend all our life in a dream, wasting our time and ignoring the true purpose of life — what can be put to our credit? *If this time goes fruitless, you will have wasted the valuable birth.* We receive but the rewards of our actions, but all our deeds are motivated by desire for our own pleasure. Had man received right understanding, would he have acted in this way? But, he repeats his mistakes again and again, and goes on paying for

them. These misdeeds may appear attractive from the body's level, but not from the level of the soul.

*Your actions hold no glory; you have not earned the Naam but have wasted your life . . .*

You could not hold down either this birth or the next by your actions. Had you done something toward the true life, your name would have been respected. Whose names are remembered in this world? — Only the true Masters, who had right understanding. How many such Masters have there been? Not more than two or three hundred in all. For instance, the name of Nanak is today upon the lips of everyone. Very few people know the names of his parents, as similarly the names of Kabir's parents are not remembered. But, the Masters themselves are glorified in this world and in all other worlds. The people whose expression of life remains at the level of the body will earn no fame in either this world or the hereafter. One may look after the body carefully, for God resides therein and He can be realized therein. Feed it, protect it from the weather, and do your give and take with pleasure. But, if you do not do that work which was intended for the human life, then,

*Curse be on eating, curse be on sleep; Curse on the clothes that cover the body, curse on family and acquaintances; If God is not realized with all these, the time that is gone will not return, and the precious birth is wasted.*

One can see how one's angle of vision can change, just by listening to these words. But, what is the use of their entering through one ear and leaving by the other, or if they are remembered only long enough to repeat to others? These teachings should be imbibed in our very lives; this is why it is said, "Wanted, reformers — not of others, but of themselves." And, what will be achieved? — The Godhead.

*O Baba Nanak, I am standing all alone;  
No one has a thought for me.*

The body now explains to Guru Nanak that no one cares what happens; so it never recognized the true value of the soul. When the soul is not enlivening the body, who is interested? The body was given to enable us to know the Maker. Who is it that forms the child in the mother's womb? Can any human being make even one eye? But, no matter at what time a person dies, the relatives rush anxiously to cremate that body which once was a source of pride to some individual.

*Arabian and Turkish horses, gold and finery, surrounded me.*

Our lives are filled with items for the body's comfort. In the past they had fine horses to ride; today people drive around in luxurious motor cars, and adorn their bodies with fine clothes. There should be a reasonable limit to the usefulness of such things. If one can buy cloth at some reasonable price, then why pay extravagantly? The more expensive the purchases, the more worry about the household budget; so why not live within one's means? This is really the woman's responsibility; for if simple clothing and simple living were adopted, the man would not need to exceed the limits of honesty in order to keep up unnecessarily high standards. I am telling you simple words of truth. Man is helpless; he has turned himself into a slave, and must do what is demanded of him, even if it means resorting to lies and worse. This demand for more and more luxury is merely for the body's comfort; and when we leave, can we take it with us? Even the body itself must remain here — what to speak of the goods we go on accumulating, like misers.

*Nothing goes with you, O Nanak;  
The foolish again and again deceive themselves.*

We leave this world free from all material possessions, and yet we go on striving to obtain more and more; so much so that it has become almost impossible for a man to earn his living honestly, for either openly or secretly all the dishonest means are used to gain more money. We deceive ourselves this way. Money is piled up in the banks, in houses, buried under the ground; and after fighting all his life to accumulate his hoard, others will go on fighting over it when the man dies. To earn one's living is essential, it is imperative; but it must be done by honest means. If a man actually earns two hundred, but spends a thousand, where does the extra eight hundred come from? Such actions are followed by court cases — and *then* he runs to the temples and churches. Only the value of your actions will accompany you when you leave this world — so share your honest earnings with others.

*Sweetened fruits, all have I tasted;  
But only the Naam Nectar of Immortality is food.  
Everything has its own place.  
Sugar, honey, butter, milk, — all are sweet; but the inner sweetness  
beggars all description.*

Naam is the food of the soul. The Ever-Existent Lord is all Light, and our soul which is His entity is also Light. The soul can only realize true bliss when it rejoins the All-Conscious Lord; but unfortunately, it has attached itself to the outer attractions; so how can it realize itself and the Lord? The Masters say that the rider is only secure in the saddle if his feet are both firmly entrenched in the stirrups. It means that a person should be perfectly balanced — both in the worldly expression of life and in one's spiritual existence also. Unless one can at will get above all worldly and

home affairs, is there any true freedom? Sri Ramakrishna would sometimes ask those who came to him the question, "Are you married?" If they replied in the affirmative, he would say, "The condition of those who are free from worldly ties is very bad; but for the fish that is caught in the net, it is most difficult to regain his freedom." Spirituality can be learned only while one is living an ordinary family life with ordinary worldly duties; but be careful — the boat should be in the water; the water should not be in the boat!

This physical "boat," which was given us to enable the soul to realize God, has many holes. If one is not fortunate enough to sit with a realized soul, then Spirituality is most difficult for the renunciate and the householder both. I say this for I have had some experience in living in the forests, and can tell you with authority that those who have renounced worldly life are in very bad condition. It is true that the householder must, of necessity, be in contact with others; but those who renounce become dependent upon other people like beggars going from house to house.

Furthermore, they resort to lying and cheating, and sometimes more. It amounts to this: that a man leaves his one home to renounce, and promptly adopts hundreds of homes to assist him with food, shelter, and so on. And, what type of person renounces his home? — The type which is afflicted by poverty or some worldly woe or other. To put on yellow robes — to renounce — to call oneself a sadhu — spiritually speaking, of what use is it all to the soul? To live in contact with the world or not is more a question of attachment and detachment. Wherever you are, whatever you do, try to remain detached. If one renounces, and then gets attached to a hut, the natural surroundings, animals in the forest, etc. — what is the use of that?

As long as a man has no right understanding, he cannot succeed spiritually. Moreover, without the help of one who not only has right understanding, but can demonstrate the subject by giving a practical experience, one cannot achieve salvation. Without a true Guru, there *is* no salvation. It is a written law which applies to all, and this includes the renunciates. *In this world of illusion, do not forget: Without the Guru, no one has crossed over.* It is not necessary to leave one's home and environments. It is necessary for a householder to have a Guru who has also led a householder's life; otherwise the disciple will feel that his Guru, being a renouncer, knows nothing of the mundane life. He who has lived the worldly life, and while living in that worldly life has gained freedom from it, genuinely can show that there is hope for others, with His help. Right understanding and right guidance from a realized person is vital, for spiritual knowledge cannot be got from lecturers and scholars. True guidance is required both here and hereafter.

*You make the foundation stronger and stronger;  
But this house will crumble to dust.*

Even when building a material house people make the foundations strong enough that their house may stand erect, and beautify it that it may outshine others — but why, and for how long? The world is but a travelers' inn, where men stay for but a few nights.

A certain fakir entered a beautiful palace and sat down inside. After some time, the King passed by, and seeing the simple fakir, challenged him, "Do you realize where you are sitting?" The fakir replied, "I am sitting in a travelers' inn." The King, rather annoyed, said, "Can you not see the difference between an inn and a royal palace?" The fakir then asked who had lived there before the King, and the King told him that his father had lived there, and before that his grandfather. "Then," the fakir pointed out, "What else is this place but a travelers' inn?"

Christ taught that it is more difficult for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. So, spiritual help is not a task for mere talkers, who have no real knowledge of the subject. We are like the poor overburdened donkey that got stuck in the mire, with the load of karmas from birth upon birth on our heads. How would that poor donkey have released himself from the bog? If some competent person does not take pity on us, and unload some of our karmic burden, and pull us out of the tenacious mire of senses by giving a boost to rise up, then how will we get started on the true path? One Master puts it this way:

*What attributes has the Guru of the world, if he removes not the karmas?  
Why take a lion's protection if the jackals continue to threaten?*

What is the use of accepting the guidance of one who has no competency for the work? Anyone can give a fine talk with a little practice, but how many people can you find who will give an experience of the Beyond? This is the crucial point. *Through the Guru's blessing, one unravels it.* — When? When one is free of senses; when, with the Guru's mercy, one rises above the body and sees that one's true self is not the body, but is the controller of the body. Only then is one on the way to God-realization.

*Hoarding and grabbing, the blind man claims possession, thinking all is his.*

Steeped in ignorance, man claws at the goods of the world with ardent possessiveness. In the end his ill-gotten gains will remain behind, but the fruit of the sinful actions will be reaped. On the subject of illusion, Lord Rama said that whenever the question of "mine" and "yours" comes, that

is illusion. Man is blind, and thinks the whole world belongs to him, but the one whose eye is open knows better.

*Gold, property, money, nothing will leave this world with you.*

Man should make a home here — that is necessary — but he should always be grateful to God and content with what He has given.

*The blessing resides in a peaceful temple, where the dhyān is perpetually focused inwardly.*

All earnings should come in a righteous way — no one should squeeze the blood of others for his own benefit. It is said, *Ill-gotten, ill-spent*. See for yourself, — can those who earn dishonestly live righteously? Their lives are steeped in all the world's vices. But, a good man's honest earnings can be of true help to others. Even the name of God and what is termed Spirituality are more of a business today than the material business.

*Kabir Sahib says, All have forgotten themselves in the stomach's business.*

The minister or priest will advise a person to say so many prayers and give so much in alms, to solve his environmental problems; and is this not business? You can stand aside and survey what is happening. Preaching was once the right of those who had actually realized the Truth; but now it is mostly a business, and appears to be a very easy way of earning money. With a few paid workers to extol the virtues of these preacher-businessmen, and with a pomp of ceremony of bowing and scraping, the money is collected in. The world's eye is closed, and so it dances to anyone's tune.

*Listen, foolish innocent mind, your actions will reap their own rewards.*

The mind must awaken and realize that whatever actions he performs must be fully paid for. That Great Pen's writing can never be erased. *As you sow, so shall you reap*. How can we escape what is written by the pen of the Lord Himself? We can escape, if we meet the Maker of all things. First, Guru Nanak spoke to the body, and now he speaks to the mind, telling it how entangled it is in outer things. *Mind, you are the image of the Light — realize your value*. Instead of this it is stuck fast in the passions and enjoyments of the senses, making futile attempts to bring permanency to the body and the world. He should have more thought for himself and his future; but without becoming a conscious co-worker of the Divine plan, one cannot get free from this condition.

*Our Emperor is the greatest of all, and We are His Emissaries.*

There is only one true Emperor, and Masters are His chosen emissaries. They come to the world upon His orders — they come to awaken man. *He who sent you is calling you back; Return with peace and joy.* You have got a golden opportunity; so return home and enjoy perpetual bliss. You can say we are all business representatives — but what kind of business? — The true business through which the Lord is realized — through which the Truth can be bought. *Do Satsang; seek the Truth.* And love the Guru. What kind of love is this? It is obedience. Your actions should all be good. Remember, those actions which bring you closer to God are right actions. It is clear and simple. Know yourself and know God.

*The soul and the physical are His; Life and death are subject to His will.*

You will never truly succeed unless you make something worthwhile of your life. Every man comes to the world crying, and goes on crying all through life. When he leaves finally, he is crying still. With love, Guru Nanak reminds us that life and death are in the Lord's hands. Surrender to Him and gain right understanding — only then will you get the full benefit from your life. If you have understood what I have been saying, then live up to it all. Merely listening to the words will not be of real benefit. Whatever food is digested will give strength.

